

those present have voted in the affirmative.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

EXPRESSING SENSE OF CONGRESS THAT PRESIDENT ISSUE PROCLAMATION RECOGNIZING A NATIONAL LAO-HMONG RECOGNITION DAY

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 88) expressing the sense of the Congress that the President should issue a proclamation recognizing a National Lao-Hmong Recognition Day, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. CON. RES. 88

Whereas the Lao-Hmong, which means "free people", are Laotian members of the Hmong tribe and are noted for their warrior tradition, loyalty, and bravery;

Whereas beginning in 1960 the United States recruited thousands of the Lao-Hmong to fight against the Communist Pathet Lao and North Vietnamese Army regulars in Laos;

Whereas the United States relied heavily on the Lao-Hmong Special Guerrilla Units to engage in direct combat with North Vietnamese troops from 1960 to 1975;

Whereas the Lao-Hmong conducted tactical guerrilla actions, flew thousands of deadly combat missions in support of the Armed Forces and the Central Intelligence Agency, and fought in conventional and guerrilla combat clashes with extreme casualties;

Whereas the Lao-Hmong, although outnumbered, fought against enemy forces to disrupt the flow of troops and war supplies along the Ho Chi Minh Trail;

Whereas the Lao-Hmong protected United States personnel, guarded United States Air Force radar installations, gathered critical intelligence about enemy operations, and undertook rescue missions to save the lives of downed United States pilots;

Whereas more than 35,000 of the Lao-Hmong lost their lives defending the democratic way of life, and many more were seriously injured and disabled;

Whereas thousands of Lao-Hmong suffered grievous injuries and permanent disabilities, and thousands more were captured and sent to Communist concentration camps;

Whereas after the conclusion of the war, many Lao-Hmong soldiers were the victims of acts of retribution and atrocities by the Pathet Lao, causing many of the Lao-Hmong to flee to neighboring Thailand and become refugees; and

Whereas beginning with the City Council of Golden, Colorado, in 1995, various State and local governments have issued proclamations declaring July 22 as Lao-Hmong Recognition Day, and the issuance of a Presidential proclamation supporting the goals of Lao-Hmong Recognition Day would recognize the bravery, sacrifice, and loyalty to the United States exhibited by the Lao-Hmong in Southeast Asia: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That it is the sense of the Congress that the President should issue a proclamation—

(1) supporting the goals of Lao-Hmong Recognition Day; and

(2) calling on the people of the United States to recognize the service and sacrifice of the men and women of the Lao-Hmong with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) and the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN).

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on H. Con. Res. 88.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Florida?

There was no objection.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of House Concurrent Resolution 88, and I commend the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. TANCREDI) for introducing this important measure.

This resolution expresses congressional support for the goals of Lao-Hmong Recognition Day. It asks the President to issue an appropriate proclamation. That proclamation should recognize the contributions of the Lao-Hmong in defending freedom and democracy. And it should call on Americans to recognize the service and the sacrifice of the Lao-Hmong with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

The Lao-Hmong fought valiantly against the Communist Pathet Lao and the North Vietnamese Army regulars in Laos during the Vietnam War. The United States relied heavily on the Lao-Hmong Special Guerrilla Units to engage in direct combat with North Vietnamese troops from 1960 to 1975. They conducted tactical guerrilla actions. The Lao-Hmong flew thousands of deadly combat missions to support our Armed Forces and the CIA. And they also fought in conventional and guerrilla combat clashes, suffering extreme casualties.

Although outnumbered, the Lao-Hmong fought against enemy forces to disrupt the flow of troops and war supplies along the Ho Chi Minh Trail. They protected United States personnel, guarded our Air Force installations, gathered critical intelligence about enemy operations, and undertook rescue missions to save the lives of our downed pilots.

Mr. Speaker, this resolution notes that "Lao-Hmong" means "free people." The brave and loyal members of the Hmong tribe paid a steep price for defending their freedom and the democratic way of life. More than 35,000 were killed. Thousands more were seriously injured. Thousands were captured and sent to Communist concentration camps.

The suffering of the Lao-Hmong did not end with the war, because after the war, the Pathet Lao retaliated against the many Lao-Hmong soldiers, committing many atrocities against them. Many became refugees when they were driven from native Laos. About 170,000 or more Hmong now live here with us in the United States.

In 1995, the city council of Golden, Colorado, first established a special day to recognize the contributions of the Lao-Hmong. Since then, a number of State and local governments have also declared July 22 as Lao-Hmong Recognition Day. The Federal Government should recognize and support these efforts as well.

Mr. Speaker, my husband is a decorated Vietnam veteran. He was wounded in that war, so I come to this floor with a special gratitude for the sacrifices and the suffering that the Lao-Hmong endured because they supported the men and women of our military forces in Southeast Asia. As a Cuban American, I feel a special empathy for the pain inflicted on them because they fought against communism.

Mr. Speaker, I strongly urge all Members to support this important resolution.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to join with the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) in support of this resolution expressing the sense of Congress that the President should issue a proclamation recognizing a National Lao-Hmong Recognition Day.

Mr. Speaker, in the late 1960s, a Central Intelligence Agency agent known only as Colonel Billy, went into Laos to look for Vang Pao, a Hmong military leader. By the age of 18, Vang Pao had led two raids against the North Vietnamese forces that had penetrated into northern Laos. When Colonel Billy found Vang Pao, he asked him if the Hmong would be willing to help stop the Communist advance in Laos. It is reported that Vang Pao said, "For me, I cannot live with communism. I must either leave or fight. I prefer to fight."

Like Vang Pao, thousands of the Lao-Hmong fought against the Communist Pathet Lao and North Vietnamese Army in Laos. Known for their warrior tradition, loyalty and bravery, the Lao-Hmong Special Guerrilla Units engaged in direct combat with North Vietnamese troops from 1960 to 1975.

The Lao-Hmong conducted tactical guerrilla actions, flew thousands of deadly combat missions in support of the Armed Forces and the CIA, and fought in conventional and guerrilla combat clashes with extreme casualties.

Although outnumbered, the Lao-Hmong fought against enemy forces to disrupt the flow of troops and war supplies along the Ho Chi Minh Trail. The Lao-Hmong protected United States

personnel, guarded United States Air Force installations, gathered critical intelligence about enemy operations, and undertook rescue missions to save the lives of downed United States pilots. More than 35,000 of the Lao-Hmong lost their lives defending the democratic way of life and many more were seriously injured and disabled.

H. Con. Res. 88 expresses the sense of Congress that the President should issue a proclamation recognizing a National Lao-Hmong Recognition Day. Let us recognize the Lao-Hmong for their fight for freedom and democracy, a fight, yes, Mr. Speaker, that carries on unto this day.

Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I commend the distinguished gentleman from Colorado (Mr. TANCREDI) for introducing this proclamation and for working so hard to ensure its passage. I also thank the chairman, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON), from the Committee on Government Reform, and the ranking member, the gentleman from California (Mr. WAXMAN), for expediting consideration of this important resolution.

Mr. Speaker, it is very appropriate for Congress to pay tribute to the Lao-Hmong at this troubled time in our history. President Reagan referred to the United States as a "shining city on the hill" because it has been a beacon of freedom in a world that is largely unfree.

Honoring the Lao-Hmong reminds us in the long struggle against the evil of communism, many followed the light of that beacon. A diverse array of people around the globe stood shoulder to shoulder with the United States. They, too, paid the heavy price of freedom's defense that is often required.

Evil forces are again warring against the United States and all that we stand for. We have defeated evil before, and we will defeat it again; but we will not have to do it alone. As we found steadfast friends in the Lao-Hmong to fight with us against the evils of communism in Southeast Asia, we will also find steadfast friends among freedom-loving people around the world to stand with today. I ask all Members to support this resolution.

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I want to commend the gentleman from Colorado, Mr. TANCREDI, for crafting H. Con. Res. 88 a resolution expressing the sense of the Congress that the President should issue a proclamation recognizing a National Lao-Hmong Recognition Day.

Mr. Speaker, the Hmong are a brave, loyal and gentle people who fought and died beside our soldiers and pilots during the Vietnam War. Once we packed up and went home many thousands of the Hmong were tortured and butchered by the Pathet Lao and Vietnamese for their steadfast loyalty and trust in us.

The Lao-Hmong conducted tactical guerrilla actions, flew thousands of deadly combat missions in support of the U.S. Armed Forces and the Central Intelligence Agency, and fought in conventional and guerrilla combat clashes. They suffered extreme casualties. In addition, the Lao-Hmong, although outnumbered, fought against enemy forces to disrupt the flow of troops and war supplies along the Ho Chi Minh Trail.

More than 35,000 of the Lao-Hmong lost their lives defending the democratic way of life, and many more were seriously injured and disabled. We owe the Hmong a great deal. What they did for us should never be forgotten.

Accordingly proclaiming a National Lao-Hmong Recognition Day is the very least we can do to recognize their sacrifice and I urge my colleagues to fully support the resolution.

Mr. TANCREDI. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pride that I rise to thank and honor, Mr. Speaker, those who served with America to protect democracy in Southeast Asia. The commitment and sacrifice of the Lao-Hmong people should never be forgotten. The citations that will be presented will represent a collective thanks from all of us.

The Lao-Hmong, which means "free people," are Laotian members of the Hmong tribe and are noted for their warrior tradition, loyalty, and bravery. Beginning in 1960 the United States recruited thousands of the Lao-Hmong to fight against the Communist Pathet Lao and North Vietnamese Army regulars in Laos. The United States relied heavily on the Lao-Hmong Special Guerrilla Units to engage in direct combat with North Vietnamese troops from 1960 to 1975. The Lao-Hmong conducted tactical guerrilla actions, flew thousands of deadly combat missions in support of the Armed Forces and the Central Intelligence Agency, and fought in conventional and guerrilla combat clashes with extreme casualties. The Lao-Hmong, although outnumbered, fought against enemy forces to disrupt the flow of troops and war supplies along the Ho Chi Minh Trail.

The Lao-Hmong protected United States personnel, guarded United States Air Force radar installations, gathered critical intelligence about enemy operations, and undertook rescue missions to save the lives of downed United States pilots. More than 35,000 of the Lao-Hmong lost their lives defending the democratic way of life, and many more were seriously injured and disabled. Thousands of Lao-Hmong suffered grievous injuries and permanent disabilities, and thousands more were captured and sent to Communist concentration camps. After the conclusion of the war, many Lao-Hmong soldiers were the victims of acts of retribution and atrocities by the Pathet Lao, causing many of the Lao-Hmong to flee to neighboring Thailand and become refugees.

Beginning with the City Council of Golden, Colorado, in 1995, various state and local governments have issued proclamations declaring July 22 as Lao-Hmong Recognition Day. The issuance of a Presidential Proclamation supporting the goals of Lao-Hmong Recognition Day will recognize the bravery, sacrifice, and loyalty to the United States exhibited by the Lao-Hmong in Southeast Asia. I call on the American people today, Mr. Speaker, to recognize the service and sacrifice of the Lao-Hmong men and women with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

Mr. KIND. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Con. Res. 88, expressing the sense of the Congress that the President should issue a proclamation recognizing a National Lao-Hmong Recognition Day.

The United States owes a debt of gratitude to the Hmong veterans, and their families, who served as loyal and dedicated allies during the Vietnam conflict. Through their sacrifices, many American lives were saved in Southeast Asia, and our nation must remain committed to recognizing their service.

Over this past weekend, we honored those who served our nation through Veterans Day parades and celebrations around the country. Many Hmong, however, are not considered veterans by our government even though they participated in covert operations directed by the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency. Between 20,000 to 30,000 Hmong lost their lives during the war and more than 100,000 Hmong were forced to either flee or live in refugee camps. Presidential proclamation of a National Lao-Hmong Recognition Day will represent our resolve as a nation that the Hmong soldiers who fought for the freedom and liberty in Southeast Asia should be honored for their service.

This legislation is also important because it calls on the people of the United States to recognize not only the military service of Lao-Hmong veterans and their families, but to also recognize their valuable contribution to American society. Approximately 170,000 Hmong currently reside in the United States, including 35,000 in my home state of Wisconsin. Their cultural contribution to America's melting pot should be recognized, too, because it is through our diversity and understanding that our nation gains strength.

H. Con. Res. 88 represents America's gratitude to the Lao-Hmong for their sacrifices in defense of American values and freedoms, and I encourage my colleagues to support it.

Mr. KLECZKA. Mr. Speaker, I support H. Con. Res. 88, the National Lao-Hmong Recognition Day, and praise the proud heritage of the Lao-Hmong people who reside in my district and throughout the United States. The Hmong are originally an agrarian people that were scattered across parts of China, Laos, China, Thailand, and Vietnam. The Hmong that now reside in the United States came mainly from Laos as refugees following the Vietnam War.

During the Vietnam War, the Hmong were recruited by the CIA to provide the U.S. with reconnaissance and guerrilla-combat support for military actions in the country of Laos. They were so trusted and effective that they were relied upon to undertake rescue missions to save downed American pilots and protect our military installations. The Hmong are remembered by the Vietnam veterans that they fought beside as loyal, courageous fighters who prevented many American casualties.

Following the United States withdrawal from the region of Southeast Asia, the Hmong people were targeted for persecution by the communist Pathet Lao government in Laos, mainly due to the support they had provided our nation during the war. Many of the Hmong people recall this persecution of systematic imprisonment and killing, leaving them with awful memories of bloody violence and the deaths of loved ones.

To survive, the Hmong showed the same courage and tenacity as when they fought beside our soldiers, leaving their ancestral homelands for America and hoping to adapt to a

country, culture and language that bore no resemblance to their own. Before arriving in the U.S., the Hmong were a tribal society without a written language until the mid-20th century. Additionally, many of the Hmong were recruited to be guerrillas at the ages of 12–14 and hence did not attend school after that point. Since 1975, over 200,000 Hmong refugees have resettled in the U.S. Their adjustment to American society has been difficult, but with perseverance and determination the Hmong people have overcome and succeeded.

Last year, I cosponsored and the House passed legislation later enacted into law, which expedites the naturalization of the Hmong who served with special guerrilla units in Laos during the Vietnam war. Yet a comprehensive acknowledgment of the plight and indomitable will of the Hmong-Americans that reside in our country and community is needed. I strongly support this legislation encouraging the President to declare a National Lao-Hmong Recognition Day and calling on the American people to recognize the service and sacrifice of the Hmong people. It is proper for all that the Hmong have done, similar to countless other immigrant groups, as they add one more thread to the fabric of our American society and history.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 88, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the concurrent resolution, as amended, was agreed to.

The title of the concurrent resolution was amended so as to read: "Concurrent resolution expressing the sense of the Congress that the President should issue a proclamation to recognize the contribution of the Lao-Hmong in defending freedom and democracy and supporting the goals of Lao-Hmong Recognition Day."

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

CELEBRATING 300TH ANNIVERSARY OF WILLIAM PENN'S CHARTER OF PRIVILEGES, 250TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE LIBERTY BELL, AND 225TH ANNIVERSARY OF FIRST PUBLIC READING OF DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 254) encouraging the people of the United States to celebrate the 300th anniversary of William Penn's Charter of Privileges, the 250th anniversary of the Liberty Bell, and the 225th anniversary of the first public reading of the Declaration of Independence.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. CON. RES. 254

Whereas William Penn was a distinguished statesman and a principled defender of human rights and religious liberties;

Whereas in 1701, William Penn wrote Charter of Privileges, which set a new standard for religious liberty that profoundly impacted the Nation's history and still provides an example for the world today;

Whereas religious freedom is still one of the most fragile liberties, and today, millions of people around the world are persecuted for their religious beliefs;

Whereas the year 2001 marks the 300th anniversary of the publication of Charter of Privileges;

Whereas the Liberty Bell was designed to commemorate the 50th anniversary of Charter of Privileges and is a powerful reminder of the Nation's commitment to freedom and justice;

Whereas the Liberty Bell became a defining symbol of the abolitionist movement, which sought to rid the Nation of slavery;

Whereas the year 2001 marks the 250th anniversary of the completion of the Liberty Bell; and

Whereas the year 2001 is also the 225th anniversary of the first public reading of the Declaration of Independence, which contains the immortal phrase: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights": Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That the Congress—

(1) encourages the people of the United States to celebrate the 300th anniversary of William Penn's Charter of Privileges, the 250th anniversary of the Liberty Bell, and the 225th anniversary of the first public reading of the Declaration of Independence; and

(2) encourages the Nation's leaders to reaffirm their commitment to promoting human rights and religious freedom in the Nation and around the world.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) and the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN).

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. Ros-Lehtinen. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on H. Con. Res. 254.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Florida?

There was no objection.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of House Concurrent Resolution 254 today, and I commend my distinguished colleague, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. PITTS), for introducing this resolution and for working so hard to bring it to the floor.

House Concurrent Resolution 254 encourages the people of the United States to celebrate the anniversaries of three important events in the history of Pennsylvania and indeed in our Nation's history. This resolution also encourages our country's leaders to reaffirm our commitment to promoting human rights and religious freedom in the United States and around the world.

The year 2001 marks the anniversaries of three historic events which have profoundly influenced the principles upon which this great Nation was founded. It is the 300th anniversary of William Penn's "Charter of Privileges," the 250th anniversary of the completion of the Liberty Bell, and 225th anniversary of the first public reading of the Declaration of Independence.

William Penn, author of the Charter of Privileges, was a distinguished statesman and a principled defender of human rights and religious liberties. When William Penn wrote the Charter of Privileges in 1701, he set a new standard for religious liberty which impacted the Nation's history and still provides an example for the world today. Both the concepts underlying the "free exercise" and the "establishment" clauses of the First Amendment were embodied in that charter.

Moreover, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Penn felt so strongly about the importance of religious liberty that he guaranteed that this provision of the charter would remain inviolate forever because, in his words, "the happiness of mankind descends so much upon the enjoying of liberty of their consciences." This was the only provision so guaranteed.

The Liberty Bell was designed to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Charter of Privileges. Later, the Liberty Bell became a defining symbol of the abolitionist movement, which sought to rid our Nation of slavery.

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And to this day, Mr. Speaker, it remains one of the most recognized and most powerful reminders of our Nation's commitment to freedom and justice.

The Declaration of Independence has also been one of the most potent symbols of our commitment to liberty. Its first public reading marked the first public utterance of a phrase that has since been revered by Americans and freedom-loving people around the world: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights."

Mr. Speaker, I encourage all Members to vote for this important resolution. That vote will reaffirm our commitment to promoting human rights and religious freedom in the Nation and around the world, and it will encourage all Americans to reflect upon these important events.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, William Penn was a distinguished statesman and a principled defender of human rights and religious liberty. Born on October 14, 1644, to Anglican parents, William Penn converted to Quakerism after hearing the famous apostle Thomas Loe. He spent much of his time in prison for his radical